

Agenda for Industry, Tourism and Economic Development Committee

Council Chambers , Read St. Merrickville

5:00 pm, Tuesday Feb 20, 2018

1. Welcome and additions/approval of agenda
2. Declaration of pecuniary interest
3. Minutes Jan 15 2017
4. Old Business
5. New Business
  - i) Chamber of Commerce member appointment
  - ii) Teeny Tiny Summit results ( attach)
  - iii) Make a plan to meet with Festival leaders (YG)
  - iv) BR&E report from Feb 15 training (CK-L & YG)
6. Date and time of next meeting
7. Adjourn

IDEAS TO ACTION



# TEENY TINY ★ SUMMIT ★

2017



Rural Ontario is composed of diverse communities, with varying requirements to support community revitalization. While some places have strong drivers of economic growth, and organization and staff resources to support economic development, that is not the case for all communities. Where this local capacity is lacking, the community's ability to take advantage of opportunities can be constrained.

Economic development principles and best practices can be similar across diverse communities, however, some elements must be practiced differently in Teeny Tiny Places.

Several years ago, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff with the Regional Economic Development Branch (REDB), began to notice there was very limited uptake and engagement with their economic development tools and resources among smaller municipal clients. It was noted that the lack of participation was largely among places that had several characteristics in common:

- Rural location
- Populations < 1000
- Stable or slightly declining populations
- No dominant drivers of economic growth
- No paid staff at lower tier level, dedicated to economic development
- Lack of water and wastewater servicing in village centres

REDB began examining the reasons for lack of participation and the potential means to address them, starting with a pilot workshop held in Tay Valley (Lanark County) in 2015. With a positive response and many ideas to take forward, the first full-fledged Teeny Tiny Summit was held in Seeley's Bay (Leeds and Grenville) in 2016, featuring author, former Alberta MLA and community developer Doug Griffiths.

The response to that summit was overwhelming, with a sold out hall, waiting list, and some participants travelling from west of Toronto to attend. Three additional communities stepped forward and initiated their own Teeny Tiny Summits, in partnership with their local OMAFRA advisors, resulting in other offerings in Maynooth (Hastings), Neustadt (Grey) and Alvinston (Sarnia-Lambton). Moving forward, the 2017 series was initiated, with summits in Merrickville-Wolford (Leeds and Grenville), and Havelock-Belmont-Methuen (Peterborough). The 2017 series featured renowned Australian community development expert Peter Kenyon.

In total, over 600 people in rural Ontario have attended a Teeny Tiny Summit in the 15 months between the Seeley's Bay and Havelock events. Attendees are a mix of municipal councillors, staff, support organizations, and volunteers. This strong and energetic response demonstrates that a lack of participation noted at the outset of this journey was not a result of lack of energy, enthusiasm, or interest. In contrast, it shows that Teeny Tiny Places are a wellspring of resources and engagement, when they identify a program that is relevant to their context.

Throughout this process, several key issues have emerged as critical to the success of community revitalization and thereby economic development in Teeny Tiny Places. These issues were the focus of the 2017 summits.

**ONE SIZE**

**DOES NOT**

**FIT ALL**

### Strategic Planning Without Tears



Liz Huff used the example of "Seeley's Bay Steps Up" to illustrate the importance of a comprehensive community revitalization plan, carried out in a way that is fun and well-paced for volunteers. She advocated for setting realistic and impactful goals while leveraging skills and expertise both in and outside of your community.

### Small Village Water & Wastewater Servicing



Mike Dwyer (Merrickville) and Lynn MacLennan (Havelock) discussed how Teeny Tiny places face overwhelming challenges when trying to provide water and wastewater servicing. Creative policy solutions and the use of innovative technology were discussed as ways of opening key opportunities for village revitalization.

### Municipal Volunteer Relationships



In Teeny Tiny Places, volunteers are an essential element of economic development. Using the Keene Pumpkin Festival as her example, Nikki Nelson explored how municipalities can collaborate with volunteers in ways that benefit the entire community.

### Risk Management / Insurance for Community Groups



Insurance for community events or groups can often be expensive and challenging. Brian Grat-tan discussed several common types of insurance for community groups and organizations as well as potential measures that could be put into place to control or minimize the risk associated with an activity or event.

### Big Data for Small Places



Bob Leitch (Merrickville) and Nelson Rogers (Havelock) spoke about common questions surrounding big data. What issues can be addressed with data and analytics? How can relevant data be found and how data can improve the understanding of community needs? When volunteer groups are able to deal with big data, their efforts are more effective.

### Finding Your Story and Telling It



Teeny Tiny Places have so much to offer but often struggle to communicate their greatest assets and accomplishments. Using her example of the InFrontenac brand, Alison Vandervelde illustrated how Frontenac County use their brand to the fullest and promote their successes within the community and externally.



## What we learned from each other

Groups began discussions by sharing recent successes and best practices before identifying requirements to achieve these past successes or overcome current challenges. Based on the ideas brought forward, groups were then challenged to create a list of actionable steps they could take towards achieving their goals within the following 6 months.

### 1.

#### Strategic Planning Without Tears

The ability to track a strategic plan's progress and identify measures of success was recognized as a requirement. Having a strong means of measurement provides accountability. Community and staff buy-in would also be required to support the process. Partnerships were mentioned as they can become a strong asset, allowing Teeny Tiny Places to draw from outside expertise. Partnerships identified included those both within and outside of a local municipality as well as provincial organizations like OMAFRA. Research within the community was also seen as a strong priority because it could provide a wealth of information concerning public opinion, assets, and resources. Champions are key. It is very important to consult and engage key people and organizations within the community as part of the process.

Within the next 6 months we can...

- Create a strategic plan; build in quick wins to keep engagement
- Foster strong relationships: peacemaking & bridge building
- Put measures in place to ensure continuity of the plan
- Utilize current resources to forward planning: e.g. Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E)
- Mobilize and acknowledge volunteers
- Celebrate successes
- Ensure accountability is made clear in strategic plan, make this information clear to staff and councillors.
- Monitor progress and detail specific and manageable performance measures.



### 2.

#### Small Village Water & Wastewater Servicing

Participants identified several common requirements for success. There was strong support for educating both the public and key decision-makers on water and wastewater servicing issues. The public is not always aware of the costs associated with well and septic systems (often considering them to be "free services"), and some of the technical challenges and maintenance costs of micro-treatment centres. It was agreed that it is essential that decision makers educate themselves on alternative servicing methods that may be available and appropriate to meet the servicing needs of various types of land uses (e.g. residential or commercial). A willingness to be open to new and different approaches is essential when municipalities agree to develop innovative solutions to meet their water and wastewater servicing needs.

Within the next 6 months we can ....

- Cultivate an environment of cooperation, mutual respect, motivation and support between municipal staff, Council and community volunteers
- Volunteers should feel empowered by Council and municipal staff; and municipal staff need to act as positive leaders and motivators
- Include Council and staff representatives on volunteer committees
- Clarify where organizations / volunteers responsibilities stop, and the municipality's role starts
- Ensure that volunteer committees and groups are following the municipal code of conduct in order to move forward in a positive manner
- Identify the most appropriate ways of communicating with volunteers, and be transparent with community volunteers, communicating on a pro-active, regular basis in a more structured manner
- Create a "Volunteer skills matrix" and learn to understand volunteer's skill sets, which will help to find "good volunteer fits"
- Utilize student volunteer hours as the asset they are,

and find ways to promote volunteerism directly to youth in schools

- Have municipal staff complete continuity planning so current and new staff know what volunteer projects are ongoing, and what organizations are actively working on
- Invest in volunteers and invite them to events/summits/training sessions and pay for their attendance
- Host volunteer appreciation events that are meaningful, helping to ensure volunteer retention and assisting with volunteer recruitment.



### 3.

#### **Municipal Volunteer Relationships**

Working with volunteers can produce extremely innovative and creative solutions to some of the unique challenges found in Teeny Tiny Places. Increasing volunteer engagement would help to address issues of volunteer burnout, as well as provide a greater wealth of skills and knowledge to draw from. Participants acknowledged that volunteers require flexibility to be creative in how they approach projects, as well as clear and structured descriptions of their roles within events, organizations and committees. Volunteers need to be advised of “Red Tape” matters such as insurance, procurement policies, etc., and be assisted by municipal staff to address these issues as required.

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### 4.

#### **Risk Management / Insurance for Community Groups**

Participants identified some key successes they had experienced. For some, making their volunteer group a Committee of Council has allowed them to be insured by the municipal policy, which has worked well in some cases. In Havelock, a risk management approach to a toboggan hill, developed in conjunction with the insurance company, allowed the community to continue to use this recreational resource while mitigating risk. An emerging theme was that successes were achieved when clear, ongoing communication with insurance providers and protective services were in place. To achieve further successes, participants suggested that more research would be helpful to understand what types of coverage might be available to community groups. Also, that national level insurance for some groups, such as Lion’s, may be available and should be explored.

Within the next 6 months we can...

- Assign one individual to research current options and restrictions
- Invite an insurance broker to speak with volunteer groups to better understand policy options and how to employ them
- Connect with groups running similar events to learn from their experiences
- Connect with emergency response services (Fire/Police) and invite them to inspect a site to identify risk factors



## 5. Big Data for Small Places

Communities have found some help using some of OMAFRA's primary and secondary data sources, such as downtown revitalization studies, or the Analyst or Newcomer and Youth Community Indicators tools. The discussion revealed three primary requirements to realize the full potential of data for Teeny Tiny Places. First and foremost there would need to be a well-established plan for the data, and clarity on what decisions are going to be made with this data, before it is collected. There would also need to be collection consistency so that a benchmark could be set. Finally, data should be reflective of the local perspective.

Within the next 6 months we can...

- Establish what decisions will be made from the data and set an achievable goal
- Research additional resources: Rural Ontario Institute, Ontario Non Profit Network, major newspaper chain's retail distribution maps, 2016 Census, etc.
- Begin building partnerships to share data and reduce duplication
- Create plans for communicating decisions based on data as well as general findings to stakeholders.

## 6. Finding Your Story and Telling It

Hashtags like #InFrontenac or #MyOttawa are proving to be popular on social media, as they are able to connect cities, towns and small communities. These examples are planned and strategic, so what do rural communities need in order to connect their residents like this? Discussions around this topic identified a need to capitalize on assets already within the community, rather than attempting to create something new. Success would also require full community engagement from a diverse range of residents. Some communities could capitalize on strong historical backgrounds and apply a modern approach to sharing that story. It is important to use data to help to target your outreach efforts. Branding and signage are important; you need to know who you are and others need to know where you and your assets are. However, it's critical to be authentic, and not to "oversell" what your community can't deliver. It's important for communities to be ready to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves.

Within the next 6 months we can...

- Identify all current assets/talents/skill sets (head, hands, heart) within the community. Be strategic and create a volunteer bank
- Utilize "new locals" as a form of promotion: why did they move and what do they like about this location? (Build a New Life in PEC; I left the City in Hastings County)
- Conduct market research: look at how other places are promoting their community. Do not focus on their story, but how they are telling it
- Develop a framework around community assets while utilizing community networks to promote it
- Focus promotions internally at first to spark greater engagement with those living and working in your community before expanding outwards. Create ambassadors.
- Social media training for teeny tiny communities
- Engage youth
- Encourage business owners to keep track of where customers are coming from to start collecting data for more targeted marketing
- Start-up a regional Teeny Tiny network to share ideas, information, successes, challenges and stories, and perhaps create actions that span boundaries.

The summit participants brought a wealth of experience and ideas to the discussion. Learning from one another, Teeny Tiny Places can achieve great things. Do you have a story to tell? A question to ask? Join the Teeny Tiny Places Community of Practice facebook page to join the conversation.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1960497100876609>